(c) in what manner these relaxations differ from earlier concessions/ relaxations given to Pakistani nationals;

(d) whether similar relaxations are likely to be given to Indian nationals by Pakisan Government; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) to (c) Through a press release issued on July 9, 2001 the Government of India announced that henceforth Pakistan Passport holders will be allowed to come by the road route and obtain visas at the check-post at Attari. An additional check-post will also be opened at Munabao, in Rajasthan. Similar check-post will also be opened at designated points along the International Border (IB) and the Line of Control (LOC) in Jammu & Kashmir. These facilities did not exist earlier.

(d) and (e) The grant of visa and other facilities is the sovereign prerogative of each country.

Indian Prisoners of War in Pakistani Jails

540. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that more than 56 Prisoners of War (POWs) are still languishing in Pakistani jails since the 1971 war; namely in Kot Lakhpat, Muri and Landikottal jails;

(b) whether it is also a fact that more than 93,000 Pakistani POWs were returned by India in 1972 after the Simla Agreement; and

(c) if so, whether POWs issue figured in Indo-Pak high level Pervez-Atal Agenda on humanitarian grounds with a view to seek release of Indian POWs still languishing in jails and mental asylums in Pakistan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) As per available information, 54 Indian Prisoners of War (POWs) are believed to be in the custody of Pakistan.

(b) As per records available, a total of 90065 POWs were repatriated up to 30 April, 1974, out of which 79 were repatriated to Bangladesh.

(c) During his talks with Pakistan President in Agra on 15.7.2001 Prime Minister urged Pakistan to take urgent, purposeful and vigorous steps to release the 54 Indian POWs to assuage the concerns of their families and their agonies.

Hacking of Mea's Website

541. SHRI R.P. GOENKA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government's official website handled exclusively by his Ministry was reportedly hacked into recently by some foreign agencies and the hackers defaced the home page with vulgar graffiti on Indians and left a threat and some other messages;

(b) if so, details of the incident, including identity of the hackers, if established; and

(c) the action taken to improve the security firewalls of the website?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Ministry of External Affairs website http://www. indiagov. org was hacked on the night of 5-6 May, 2001. The site was hacked by a group called "Hackactivist GFORCE". The hackers defaced the home page with graffiti and also left a threat that all major Indian official websites would be "manned" by the GFORCE in a few weeks time.

(c) It was imperative that the website was made properly secure before it was restarted. Following discussions by the Ministry of External Affairs with the Ministry of Information Technology and the National Informatics Centre (NIC) it was agreed that MEA's website be hosted in NIC premises within their "secure zone" behind the NIC "firewall" which is designed to prevent hacking. The web server was shifted to the NIC on May 24, 2001 and is now fully operational with the address *http://www. meadev, nic. in.*

Indo-Nepal Cooperation against anti-national activities

542. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH 'SURYA': Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India and Nepal have decided to cooperate in not allowing activities against one another in their territories?

(b) if so, the details thereof;